



consumer news

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Bacon: To see or not to see a whole slice

The idea is catching on for redesigned bacon packages to expose more of a slice of bacon. Oscar Mayer & Co. is introducing its "rear-window" bacon packages ahead of the required date in Washington State. As of Jan. 1 the state will require all bacon packages to provide ready display of a substantial portion of a representative slice. Oscar Mayer started packing bacon in the newly designed packages last month, announcing that its "rear window" package not only will give consumers a better view of bacon slices but also will prevent the bright lights of stores from discoloring the streaky lean of the exposed slice.

Virginia Knauer, Director of Office of Consumer Affairs, has thanked Oscar Mayer for taking an initial step in exposing more bacon to shoppers. She also has told consumers: "I plan to go directly to the new Secretary of Agriculture to urge him to issue regulations for all bacon packagers to give Americans a better view of the bacon they buy. I'm sure consumers agree with me that Agriculture Dept. should require improved bacon packaging."

Agriculture Dept. officials say it is considering the need for Federal standards for bacon packages. In the meantime, it does not want state governments to issue their own regulations. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng tried in October to discourage Washington State from issuing its own bacon-package regulation. It has been apparent in conversations between Mrs. Knauer and Agriculture officials that the department has not heard from consumers about the need to see a full slice of bacon in a package. Mrs. Knauer says nevertheless it is unreasonable to think that bacon buyers, who pay 65¢ to \$1.05 a pound, do not want to know how much fat and lean they are getting for their money.

The question of the feasibility of exposing more of a bacon slice has already been answered—twice. Paperboard Packaging Council, whose members manufacture packages for bacon companies, assured Mrs. Knauer in September that commonly used packages can be redesigned to reveal as much as 85% of a bacon slice—all but about an inch of each end. And Oscar Mayer & Co. has answered the question by actually using its own "rear-window" package.

Got a question about a store's prices? Ask the store

Price Commission is requiring stores to prominently display base prices during the post-freeze economic stabilization program. The requirement applies to all food products (except unprocessed agricultural products such as eggs, potatoes, apples) and to the 40 items in each department that have the highest sales volume or those items that account for 50% of each department's total sales, whichever is less. Base prices—generally the ceiling prices permitted during the freeze—must be posted by Jan. 1.

Retail stores may increase prices above freeze levels so long as the percentage of markup does not exceed the percentage of markup that existed during 2 of the last 3 fiscal years. Also store profit margins cannot exceed those which prevailed during the freeze. But no price increases are allowable until a store complies with the price-posting requirement.

As an interim, between now and Jan. 1 stores must post a sign on each floor of business to alert consumers that base-price information is available upon request. The sign must tell consumers where to get "Base Price Information Request Forms" and where to turn them in. Consumers may use the forms to request the base price for any item sold by the store. The store must reply in writing within 48 hours after receiving the form.

Got a question about wage and price guidelines? Call IRS

If you have a question about a pay raise or prices or rents that seem to be going up, call Internal Revenue Service. It is listed in your telephone directory under "U.S. Government." Local IRS offices across the nation are the link between the public and the governing organizations of the President's post-freeze economic stabilization program, which was established to hold down increases in prices, rents, wages and salaries.

IRS will accept complaints about wages and prices by telephone, but it also has special forms for reporting possible violations of the restraints on wage and price increases. The forms will be mailed to persons if their complaints are too complicated to handle by telephone.

In addition to handling complaints, IRS will make spot checks on prices and wages.

Two advisory committees are set up to aid economic program

President Nixon has appointed two committees to advise Cost of Living Council, Pay Board and Price Commission in their task of guiding the post-freeze economic program.

Committee on the Health Services Industry will seek the cooperation of the health services in restraining cost and price increases and will suggest ways of applying anti-inflation measures to medical costs. The 21 committee members represent the medical profession, consumers, hospitals, related health occupations, health-products industries and health-insurance groups. Barbara (Mrs. William C.) Dunn, Commissioner of Connecticut's Consumer Protection Dept., is Chairman.

Committee on State & Local Government Cooperation will propose ways to apply the economic stabilization program to state and local governments, their subdivisions and their employees. Raymond W. DeWeese of the Portland (Ore.) Metropolitan Area Urban Coalition is chairman of the 17-member committee.

New Federal publications—some in Spanish

Look Before You Lease (legal and safety information for companies, schools, clubs, consumer organizations and other groups that plan to lease or charter any airplane—four seater to 747), published by Transportation Dept.; free from Office of Public Affairs, Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, D.C. 20590.

The following publications are available at U.S. Government Printing Office Bookstores or by ordering from Manager, Public Documents Distribution Center, 5801 Tabor Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19120; make checks or money orders payable to Supt. of Documents.

A Metric America—A Decision Whose Time Has Come (report of Commerce Dept.'s National Bureau of Standards study and recommendation that the U.S. changeover to the metric system of measurement within 10 years), published by National Bureau of Standards; \$2.25.

Carne de Res y de Cerdo (beef and pork nutrition information and recipes), published by Agriculture Dept.; 5¢.

Carne Desmenuizada Enlatada—Donada ó Comprada (nutrition data and recipes for free chopped canned meat), published by Agriculture Dept.; 5¢.

Frijoles—Granos Secos (nutrition information and recipes for dry beans), published by Agriculture Dept.; 5¢.

Guidelines for Drug Abuse Prevention Education (guide for education from kindergarten through grade 12), published by Justice Dept.; 75¢.

Income Tax Overpayments by Elderly (identification of various aspects of income tax overpayments problems for the aging and recommendations for improvement; problems and recommendations apply to all ages), published by Senate Special Committee on Aging; 20¢.

Pesticides—What Are Pesticides, revised (resumé of Public Health Service programs and listing of safety precautions), published by Environmental Protection Agency; 10¢ each or \$5.50 per 100.

Local libraries have government publications

You don't have to write to Washington to get some Federal Government documents and publications. Copies may be in your local library or some nearby city or college library.

The Federal Government has designated 1,045 libraries in the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam & American Samoa as depository libraries. These libraries are permitted to receive one copy of all publications of the U.S. Government.

Few libraries receive all publications because the annual list is 12,000 publications plus 7,000-10,000 prints of congressional bills and resolutions. Libraries usually select publications of general interest to their community but almost all depository libraries have copies of *Congressional Record* and *Federal Register*.

For a list of depository libraries, write to **Joint Committee on Printing, U.S. Senate Post Office, Washington, D.C. 20510.**

*** Uniform tire quality grading**

Dec. 20 is deadline for filing comments on **Transportation Dept.'s** proposal for a new consumer information regulation that would require manufacturers of new passenger-car tires to grade and label each tire with a number that indicates the quality of the tire on the basis of high speed performance, endurance, road hazard resistance, uniformity & balance. The information would give buyers of new cars data about the tire capabilities as well as guide the buyer in selecting replacement tires later. (For details, see *Federal Register*, Sept. 21, 1971, page 18751.)

Send comments (10 copies, if possible) to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5221, 400 Seventh St., S.W., Washington, DC. 20590.

*** Paint**

Jan. 1 is deadline for filing comments on a proposal for **Food & Drug Administration** to ban lead-based household paints. The proposal (made by Associate Professor Joseph A. Page; students Mary Win O'Brien & Anthony L. Young; Congressman William F. Ryan; author Jack Newfield; Edmund O. Rothschild, M.D.) calls for banning household paints that contain lead except for minute traces. The proposal notes that lead-based paints present a serious danger to the health of children who ingest them. Lead poisoning may result in severe illness and even death. (For details, see *Federal Register*, Nov. 2, 1971, page 20986.)

Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Jan. 1 is deadline for filing comments on **Food & Drug Administration's** proposal to require warning labels on paint that contains certain heavy metals. FDA has determined that the heavy metals antimony, arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, selenium and soluble barium may be toxic when ingested even in small amounts. The proposal calls for warning labels on cans of paint that contain more than 0.5% lead; a total of more than 0.05% antimony, arsenic, cadmium, mercury or selenium; or soluble barium in excess of 1% of the total barium present. The label will warn against use of such paints on surfaces and on toys which children may chew. (For details, see *Federal Register*, Nov. 2, 1971, page 20985.)

Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

*** Frankfurters**

Jan. 1 is deadline for submitting comments on **Agriculture Dept.'s** proposal to allow the use of sodium acid pyrophosphate in the curing process of frankfurters, weiners, vienna, bologna, garlic bologna, knockwurst and similar products. The proposed regulation would allow the use of the curing additive in amounts up to 8 ounces for 100 pounds (0.5%) of meat or meat byproducts. The additive is used to speed up color fixing in frankfurters and other meat products. (For details, see *Federal Register*, Nov. 2, 1971, page 20984.)

Send comments to Hearing Clerk, U.S. Agriculture Dept., Washington, D.C. 20250.

Helpful hints in choosing safe toys

You probably have finished your shopping for this Christmas, but do you know what you bought for children? It is not too late to check to be sure the toys are safe.

You may want to clip and save the following guidelines for selecting safe toys. Toys are bought throughout the year, and safety is just as important in June as in December (see CONSUMER NEWS: Oct. 15 & Nov. 1). Food & Drug Administration's Bureau of Product Safety has issued the following suggestions:

1. Choose a toy appropriate for the child's age and development. (Many toys have age-group labels on the package.)
2. Remember that younger brothers and sisters may have access to toys bought for older children.
3. Check fabric labels for "non-flammable," "flame-retardant" or "flame-resistant" notices.
4. Check instructions. They should be easy to read and understand. Instruct the child in the proper use of any toy that might cause injury through misuse.
5. Avoid toys that produce excessive noise. (Even toy cap pistols fired too close to a child's ear can cause damage.)
6. Avoid shooting games, especially those involving darts and arrows, unless the games are played under parental supervision.
7. When choosing a toy for small children, make sure it
 - is too large to be swallowed;
 - does not have detachable parts than can lodge in the windpipe, ears or nostrils;
 - is not apt to break easily into small pieces or leave jagged edges;
 - does not have sharp edges or points;
 - has not been put together with easily exposed straight pins, sharp wires or nails;
 - is not made of glass or brittle plastic;
 - is not poisonous or toxic;
 - does not have exposed flames or build up heat to dangerous levels;
 - does not have flimsy electrical wiring;
 - does not have parts that can pinch fingers or catch hair;
 - for children under 2, avoid long cords and plastic bag materials.
8. Choose carefully. Any toy if misused can be dangerous. There can be no substitute for parental interest and supervision.

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